COPY OF PAPERS
ORIGINALLY FILED

18. The system of Claim 11, a gate valve assembly disposed on said transport module to isolate said wafer processing system.

19. The system of Claim 11, wherein said container comprises a wafer cassette.

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the Office Action. No Claims have been amended. Claim 20 has been canceled. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the pending claims.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 11-13, 15, 16 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Beaulieu et al. (USPN 5,882,413). Claims 4, 10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beaulieu et al. in view of Gordon et al. (USPN 6,013,920). Claims 8 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beaulieu et al. in view of Moore et al. (USPN 6,151,447). Claims 9 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beaulieu et al. in view of Yonemitsu et al. (USPN 6,143,083). Claims 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suda et al. (USPN 6,053,980) in view of Gordon et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections for the reasons below.

Claim 1 sets forth a method including "extending a semiconductor wafer transport device from said transport module into an adjacently positioned container, said container being a separate component from said processing system...." The processing system includes a transport module and a process chamber. As claimed, the container is a separate component from the processing system. Applicant could find no teaching or suggestion in Beaulieu et al. that discloses a method for extending a semiconductor wafer transport device into a container, which is a separate component from the processing system.

Applicant submits that Beaulieu et al. teaches way from the method claimed in Applicant's Claim 1. For example, Beaulieu et al. discloses that "[t]he apparatus 10 includes a main section 12, substrate processing modules14, substrate load lock modules 16, and an atmospheric section 17. The atmospheric section 17 includes means for holding cassettes of substrates and a robot (not shown) for moving the substrates into and out of the load locks 16." (Beaulieu et al. col. 3, lines 32-37) Although Beaulieu et al. does disclose that the robot

LAW OFFICES OF
MACPHERSON KWOK CHEN
& HEID LLP
2402 MICHELSON DRIVE
SUITE 210
IRVINE, CA 92612
(949) 752-7040
FAX (949) 752-7049

ORIGINALLY FILED

arm with "holders 29 can be moved through the doorways 21 into and out of the modules 14, 16 to move the substrate S into and out of the modules 14, 16," there is no disclosure that the robot arm extends "into an adjacently positioned container, said container being a separate component from said processing system." This is especially clear since Gordon et al. discloses that the atmospheric section includes its own robot for placing wafers into the modules. Accordingly, Claim 1 is allowable over Beaulieu et al.

Claim 10 sets forth a method that includes "extending a robot including an extendible robotic arm from said transport module into an adjacently positioned Front Opening Unified Pod (FOUP), said FOUP being a separate component from said processing system...."

The Examiner has correctly noted that "Beaulieu et al. [does] not teach a container holding the wafers that is a FOUP." (Office Action dated March 28, 2002, p.4)

Applicant submits that Gordon et al. fails to correct this deficiency. As the Examiner points out "Gordon et al. teach a FOUP (22) and a docking device (20) that is made to be mounted on a semiconductor processing system." (Id.) In contrast, in Applicant's claimed invention the FOUP is "a separate component from said processing system" which is neither mounted nor otherwise attached to the processing system.

Accordingly, since Gordon et al. discloses mounting a FOUP to a processing unit, the combination of Beaulieu et al. and Gordon et al. do not arrive at Applicant's Claim 1. Thus, Claim 10 is allowable over Beaulieu et al. in view of Gordon et al.

Claim 11 sets forth a system including "a container configured to house a plurality of semiconductor wafers, said container being a separate component from said processing system...." The system also includes a wafer transport device "configured to extend into said container from said transport module...." The wafer transport device is further "configured to deliver said semiconductor wafer to said process chamber."

In contrast, Beaulieu et al. discloses "[t]he apparatus 10 includes a main section 12, substrate processing modules 14, substrate load lock modules 16, and an atmospheric section 17. The atmospheric section 17 includes means for holding cassettes of substrates and a robot (not shown) for moving the substrates into and out of the load locks 16." (Beaulieu et al. col. 3, lines 32-37) Although Beaulieu et al. does disclose that the robot arm with "holders 29 can be moved through the doorways 21 into and out of the modules 14, 16 to move the substrate S into and out of the modules 14, 16," there is no teaching or suggestion that the robot arm is configured to extend from the main section into the atmospheric section or any other

LAW OFFICES OF
MACPHERSON KWOK CHEN
& HEID LLP

2402 MICHELSON DRIVE
SUITE 210
IRVINE, CA 92612
(949) 752-7040
FAX (949) 752-7049

COPY OF PAPERS
ORIGINALLY FILED

container separate from the apparatus. Accordingly, Claim 11 is allowable over Beaulieu et al.

Claims 2-9 depend from Claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1. Claims 12-19 depend from Claim 11 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 11.

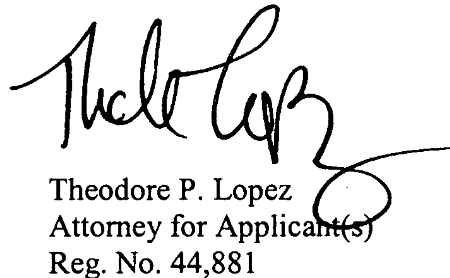
CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, pending Claims 1-19 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of the application is hereby solicited. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns, the Examiner is hereby requested to telephone Applicant's Attorney at (949) 752-7040.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on June 27, 2002.

Sandy Kim June 27, 2002

Respectfully submitted,



Theodore P. Lopez
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 44,881

LAW OFFICES OF
MACPHERSON KWOK CHEN
& HEID LLP

2402 MICHELSON DRIVE
SUITE 210
IRVINE, CA 92612
(949) 752-7040
FAX (949) 752-7049